

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0590

6917TH SECURITY GROUP, SAN VITO DEI NORMANNI AB,

BRINDISI

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

CSAF

HQ ADC ENT AFB COLO

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5392

LIMDIS

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, TSPA, OTRA, IT

SUBJECT: BAKER NUNN RELOCATION SURVEY

REFS: A) STATE 77412

B) STATE 27786

C) ROME 17263 (1974)

D) STATE 264607 (1974)

1. MISSION HAS A NUMBER OF QUESTIONS ABOUT PLANS OUTLINED IN REF A. PRINCIPAL AMONG THEM IS WHETHER RELOCATION EFFORT TIES INTO STAFFING CHANGES POSITED IN REF D, COMMENTED ON BY THIS EMBASSY IN REF C AND APPARENTLY RESCINDED IN REF B. MAY WE ASSUME THAT SHOULD BAKER-NUNN UNIT BE RELOCATED TO SIGONELLA, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT IT WOULD BE STAFFED BY APPROXIMATELY 24. U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL.

2. FOR SAN VITO. WHAT IS STAFFING PATTERN OF DET. 3 OF THE 18TH SURVEILLANCE SQUADRON? HOW MANY DEPENDENTS DO THEY ACCOUNT FOR? DO YOU PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE AND MAINTENANCE SUPPORT FOR THE
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UNIT? WOULD THEIR TRANSFER RESULT IN RELEASE OF ANY ITALIAN

NATIONAL EMPLOYEES?

3. EMBASSY NOTES SAN VITO WAS CHOSEN FOR PLACEMENT OF BAKER-NUNN IN ITALY BECAUSE OF ITS CLEAR NIGHT TIME SKY CONDITIONS. SIGONELLA HAD BEEN REJECTED BECAUSE THE ONLY AVAILABLE LAND WAS OUTSIDE THE U.S. CONTROLLED PORTION OF THE FACILITY AND BECAUSE ITS OPERATION COULD INTERFERE WITH AIR TRAFFIC. ACTIVITY AT SIGONELLA HAS INCREASED, INCLUDING AIR TRAFFIC. ARE THERE ANY NEW FACTORS THAT OVERRIDE PREVIOUS ADVANTAGES OF SAN VITO?

4. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS AGAINST CONSIDERATION OF MOVE TO MT. LIMBARA BECAUSE OF PROXIMITY TO AND ITALIAN PERCENTIONAL ASSOCIATION WITH OUR ALREADY CONTROVERSIAL HOMEPORTING ARRANGEMENT AT LA MADDALENA. A DOUBLING OF THE SIZE OF MT. LIMBARA STAFF WOULD COMPOUND ITALIAN RESERVATIONS AND WULD NOT LIKELY BE ACCEPTABLE TO GOI.

5. DECIMOMANNU OR CAGLIARI PRESENT SIMILAR DIFFICULTIES. USG PRESENTLY HAS NO UNITS AT DECIMOMANNU. NATO HAS AN ACTIVITY WITH WHICH THE USG HAS HAD LITTEL DIRECT ASSOCIATION. OUR ONLY PRESENCE IN CAGLIERI IS A COAST GUARD-RUN LORAN C STATION. IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO NEGOTIATE BIA AMENDMENT TO ADD A BAKER-NUNN UNIT TO THAT FACILITY. MOREOVER, THE ITALIAN PRESS IS SENSITIVE TO ANY INCREASE IN MILITARY PRESENCE, US OR ITALIAN, ON THE ISLAND OF SARDINIA. FINALLY, LORAN STATIONS AT PANTELLERIA AND LAMP-EDUSA RE FREQUENTLY TARGETS OF PRESS SPECULATION CLAIMING SINISTER PURPOSES. ANY ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY AT A PRESENTLY LOW LEVEL LORAN STATION COULD ONLY FUEL FURTHER FANTASIES.

6. ORIGINAL NEGOTIATIONS FOR PLACEMENT OF BAKER-NUNN CAMERA IN ITALY PROMISED SHARING OF DATA, AN ENGAGEMENT WE WILL CONFRIM IN RELOCATION NEGOTIATION. AS AN INDUCEMENT, DATA-SHARING IS CREDIBLE ONLY IF IT HAS ALREADY TAKEN PLACE UNDER PREVIOUS ARRANGEMENT. INFORMATION ON ACTUAL EXTENT OF DATA SHARING AND SERVICES PROVIDED TO ITALIAN SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY BY PRESENT FACILITY WOULD BE USEFUL IN DISCUSSIONS WITH MFA.

7. OUR PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE IS THAT THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFIARS AND MINISTRY OF DEFENSE ARE LIKELY EVENTUALLY TO AGREE MOST READILY TO SURVEY OF AND RELOCATION TO SIGONELLA. OUR POSITION WOULD BE IMPROVED IF UNIT WOULD BE SITED ON PROPERTY
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ALREADY UNDER U.S. CONTROL OUR CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM NOTWITHSTANDING, THE LONG DELAYS WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED IN OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR INSTALLATION OF A SIMPLE ANTENNA AT THE LAGO DI PATRIA SATELLITE STATION SHOULD BE BORNE IN MIND WHEN CALCULATING WHEN AND IF THE RELOCATION CAN BECOME A REALITY.
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